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ABSTRACT

This publication contains two reports of research on news media. The first is a review of more than 100 studies conducted between 1955 and 1977 that indicate that both television and newspapers are used in a generally complementary manner, although they do compete with each other for diversionary time. Among the conclusions noted in the report are that information loss seems to be greater from television than from newspapers, although there is a substantial loss of information from both newspaper and television news stories; and that newspaper use is more strongly associated with voting turnout and other political activity than is television use. The second report is based on annual tracking studies conducted from 1976 through 1978 and deals with the credibility of newspapers among the general public and government officials on a national and state basis. Among the findings reported are that while a strong majority of the public feels that the news they get from newspapers and television is "biased," they tend to define "bias" as an emphasis on bad news; that compared to other major communicators in our society, newspapers and television news have relatively strong credibility; that among college students newspapers have unusually strong credibility, while TV news does not; and that among government officials, both newspapers and news magazines have slightly greater credibility than TV news. (AEA)

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Newspapers and Television: A Review of Research on Uses and Effects

By David H. Weaver and Judith M. Buddenbaum

HIGHLIGHTS: A review of more than 100 studies on the uses and effects of newspapers and television finds substantial variations in the many uses and effects of these media. Both television and newspapers are used in a generally complementary manner, although they do compete with each other for diversionary time. Information loss seems to be greater from television than from newspapers, but there is a substantial loss of information from *both* newspaper and television news stories. Newspaper use is more strongly associated with voting turnout and other political activity than is television use.

and

Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business

By Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc.

HIGHLIGHTS: While a strong majority of the public feels that the news they get from newspapers and television is "biased," they tend to define that "bias" as an emphasis of bad news. Compared to other major communicators in our society, newspapers and other major media have relatively strong credibility. Among the public as a whole, no apparent distinction is made between the credibility of newspapers and that of TV news. However, among college students, newspapers have unusually strong credibility, while TV news does not. Among government officials, both newspapers and news magazines have slightly greater credibility than TV news.

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Newspapers and Television: A Review of Research on Uses and Effects

By David H. Weaver
and
Judith M. Buddenbaum

David Weaver is an associate professor of journalism and director of the Bureau of Media Research at Indiana University. Judith Buddenbaum is a graduate student in the School of Journalism. Both authors have worked on various newspapers—Weaver primarily as an editor and Buddenbaum primarily as a reporter. This review of research literature was commissioned by the ANPA News Research Center.

The uses and effects of mass media have been systematically studied by hundreds of scholars in this country and others since the late 1920's.[47, 61, 62, 63] There are several reviews of such studies.[28, 41, 42, 48, 55, 57, 99, 112] But none have concentrated on the similarities and differences in the uses and effects of newspapers and television. In an effort to summarize what we know about these two important media, this review covers studies published since 1955 which look at the uses and/or effects of newspapers and television.

Findings in Brief

Review of the *uses* of television and newspapers finds that people value both television and newspapers and use both in a generally complementary manner for knowledge and diversion, and as an adjunct to interpersonal discussion. Although most people regularly use both television and newspapers, on any given day a person is more likely to read a newspaper than to watch televison *news*. Television typically is seen as fulfilling a more general-surveillance function while newspaper readership is associated with specific information seeking, in-depth knowledge about a subject and guidance at election time.

As a diversion, television and newspapers do compete with each other for the consumer's *time*, but people expect both to provide some entertainment. Only in the case of media use for escape does there seem to be a clear difference between television and newspapers. Persons who can be described as "alienated" are heavy viewers of fantasy-oriented television programming, but no correlation between alienation and newspaper use has been found.

The use of television as a substitute for other activities has been documented in several studies, but no studies were found on the use of newspapers as a substitute for interpersonal contacts. Use of both newspapers and television does seem to increase when people see the content as useful in conversations with others. Television seems to be favored by those who frequently *ask* others for information about a subject, while opinion *givers* seem to prefer newspapers.

In general, whites, males, persons with relatively high levels of education and high social and economic status say they prefer newspapers while blacks, females and persons of lower socioeconomic status say they are heavy television users.

As for the *effects* of newspapers and television, the studies reviewed here (mostly one-time surveys) suggest that exposure to newspapers is associated with reinforcement, rather than change, of pre-existing political attitudes. Exposure to television is somewhat more associated with the formation of new, short-term political attitudes and general political interest than is exposure to newspapers.

Newspapers seem to be more effective than television at increasing levels of political knowledge and at telling people what issues to be concerned about in a political campaign. And newspaper editorial endorsements of particular political candidates are associated with increased vote totals in elections, especially in non-partisan elections where there are few controversial issues.

A final conclusion suggested by studies of *political effects* of newspapers and television is that newspaper use is more strongly associated with voting turnout and other political activity than is television use.

Other conclusions suggested by the studies of *non-political effects* of newspapers and television are:

- Heavy television viewing—regardless of specific content—is associated with more distrust of other persons, more fear of the world in general, an exaggerated fear of being involved in violence and more dependence upon established authorities. Heavy newspaper exposure, on the other hand, is associated with less distrust of others, less fear of the world and less dependence upon established authorities. Heavy newspaper readers are also less likely to overestimate the number of persons involved in law enforcement than are heavy television viewers.

- Newspaper reading is associated with the formation of attitudes about topics which receive regular coverage in newspapers, but such coverage does not seem to have much systematic impact on the direction or the intensity of such attitudes.

- Newspaper exposure is associated with greater knowledge of topics covered in newspapers for both children and adults, and newspapers seem to be more effective at conveying detailed information than does television.

- Information loss seems to be greater from television than from newspapers, but there is a substantial loss of information (estimated at an average of 77 percent) from *both* newspaper and television news stories.

• There seems to be a stronger association between the amount of space devoted to a topic in a newspaper and recall of information about that topic, than between the amount of time devoted to a subject by television and recall of information about that subject.

• Learning from newspapers seems to vary with a person's level of education. The more educated seem to learn more, thus perpetuating existing inequities in knowledge between better-educated and less-educated persons.

• Television plays a major role in making people aware of important breaking news (such as the assassination of a President or a disaster involving large numbers of persons), with newspapers tending primarily to supplement television and radio reports of such news. Those who rely on television for *important* breaking news seem to miss more details than substance.

• Children tend to develop a "high affection" for television before becoming involved with print media. And non-readers and light readers of daily newspapers tend to have negative attitudes about reading and regard it as "work."

• Readers of a weekly newspaper are more likely to be readers of a daily newspaper than not, and readers of a daily newspaper are more likely to watch televison *news* and to belong to a community organization than are non-readers of a daily newspaper.

Methodology

The conclusions in this review are based on more than 100 studies on the uses and effects of newspapers and television which were conducted between 1955 and 1977. Most of the studies reported here were published in one of four leading journals in the field of mass communications research: *Journalism Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting, Public Opinion Quarterly* and *Journal of Communication.*

In addition to these journals, ANPA News Research Reports and Bulletins were scanned, as well as some of the newspaper readership study abstracts on file at the ANPA News Research Center, Syracuse University. A few recent books and unpublished papers dealing with newspaper and television uses and effects were also included in this review.

Uses of Newspapers and Television

Conventional wisdom tells us, on the one hand, that television is primarily an entertainment medium while newspapers are for information—and, on the other hand, that the two media are in competition with each other for the same audience. While there is some truth in both observations, the picture that emerges from a review of mass communications research is of media audiences using both newspapers and television for knowledge, diversion and as an adjunct to interpersonal communication in a way that is more complementary than competitive.

For Knowledge

Of these three main uses, the use of television and newspapers for knowledge is the most thoroughly researched. However, to better understand both the complementary and competitive relationships between these media, we will subdivide this use for knowledge into surveillance, specific information seeking and guidance.

Diffusion studies by Budd, MacLean and Barnes[15] following significant news events indicate that, in general, one medium will be the source of awareness and the other will then be used for more specific information. However, which medium will fall into the surveillance category and which into the specific information-seeking category will be determined by a number of factors, including the time of occurrence of the event, the location of the audience at the time of the news break and the salience of the event.

For example, following a relatively *low-salience* event such as President Eisenhower's decision to run for re-election, Danielson[24] determined that although people who learned about the event from television heard about it much faster than those who learned about it from newspapers, more people learned about it from newspapers than from television. Following a *medium-salience* event such as George McGovern's decision to drop Thomas Eagleton from the 1972 Democratic ticket,[85] and a *high-salience* event like the John F. Kennedy assassination,[35] television is much more likely to be the first news source; but after hearing of the event, people generally turn to another medium for further information.

When the subject studied is routine daily news instead of a major news event, a similar pattern emerges. Studies by Stone[103] and Wade and Schramm[110] showed that most people consider television their most important news source—with newspapers their second choice—but this preference is not a case of "either/or." A study conducted by Ehrenberg, Goodhardt and Haldane[29] concerning duplication of viewing found that there is no special audience for television news and that viewing television news is not correlated with watching other public affairs programming. Other studies by Bogart[9] and Robinson[87] indicate that on any given day a person is much less likely to turn on television *news* than to read a newspaper.

Television news is used more for surveillance, and newspapers are used more for in-depth information. A study of television news recall by Neuman[81] showed

that the audience consists primarily of casual viewers, while a study by Grotta, Larkin and DePlois[40] found that readers of small daily newspapers (circulation approximately 5,000) use them for local news and advertising and turn to television for national and international news. Metropolitan newspapers are seen by these readers as providing an additional source of news for those persons wanting more complete information.

For specific information, newspapers are generally the first choice. During an election campaign, Vinyard and Sigel[109] found that 98 percent of their respondents read at least one newspaper daily, and 87 percent watched television news and public affairs programs. Newspapers were rated the most important source for keeping informed.

For information about medicine and science, Wade and Schramm[110] found a similar complementary pattern, with newspapers being the primary source and television seen as a supplementary source. In a study of medical information, however, Wright[118] found that television and newspapers are used about equally, but respondents feel newspapers provide the most useful information. Most medical school faculty members surveyed by Shaw and Van Nevel[101] occasionally found new information about their specialties in the mass media, with 92 percent of that information contained in newspapers and in general magazines.

In a more general study of sources of science news, Swinehart and McLeod[105] found that before the launching of Sputnik, newspapers were the primary source of science news—but that following the launch, television increased in importance and replaced newspapers as the main news source for some groups.

Although many studies, particularly those of children, document some increase in knowledge following general non-news television use, studies documenting the deliberate use of general television content for knowledge purposes are practically nonexistent. Wright[118] found that people mention dramatic medical shows as a *not*-very-useful source of medical information, and Katzman[51] suggested that viewers of soap operas learn how to face life and handle certain kinds of interpersonal problems from their favorite shows; but this is not necessarily the same thing as watching such content in order to learn from it.

No studies included in the scope of this review dealt with the use of newspaper comic pages, filler material or other "non-news" items for knowledge purposes.

In addition, use of newspapers and television for guidance has not been well-researched. No studies concerning television were found in this review, and newspapers have been studied only in connection with elections. Vinyard and Sigel[109] found that 60 percent of Detroit registered voters surveyed depended greatly on newspaper endorsements for local candidate selection but relied less heavily on endorsements for state and national candidates. Surveying newspaper subscribers and voters in Oregon, Rarick[86] found that 42.2 percent would take newspaper advice on a local bond issue, but only 32.8 percent would take that advice in a presidential election. The same study indicated that women are more influenced than men by editorials on issues outside the home, while men are more influenced than women by editorials on domestic matters. But whether either sex turns to editorials for specific guidance in matters beyond elections is not clear.

For Diversion

According to Robinson,[90] the average person devotes 28 percent (or 92 minutes daily) of all leisure time exclusively to television, 7 percent to newspapers and an additional 36 minutes daily to other leisure activities while also watching television as a secondary activity. Although all of this is "diversion" in the sense that it is time spent outside the confines of the normal working day, these totals include media use for knowledge and as an adjunct to interpersonal communication, as well as for the strictly diversionary purposes of entertainment, escapism and time passing.

As diversionary activities, television and newspapers clearly compete with each other for audience *time* even though their contents are not strictly competitive.

Studies from the early years of television conducted by Hamilton and Lawless[43] indicate that the chief reason for wanting television, and one of the chief values to those having it, was as a cheap form of entertainment. In a somewhat later study, Mehling[74] asked respondents which mass medium they would keep if they could have only one. Of the 52 percent who selected television, 53 percent mentioned "entertainment" and 40 percent "variety" as their reason. By comparison, 26 percent selected newspapers—but of those, only 25 percent mentioned either "entertainment" or "variety" as the reason for their choice.

Although television, particularly during daytime hours and prime time, offers many programs that are usually classified as entertainment and newspapers carry such entertainment features as comics, crossword puzzles and certain columns, the question of exactly what content people use when they want to be entertained has not received much study.

Working with a convenience sample of children aged 6 to 12, Streicher and Bonney[104] found that most made a distinction between their regular viewing and programs from which they could "learn something." For entertainment, boys preferred cartoons, drama and fantasy, while the top choices for girls were situation comedies, drama and cartoons.

Schramm, Lyle and Parker[96] found that soon after children learn to read, they begin turning to newspapers to read the comics. This use continues even after they develop an interest in other content.

That adults expect to be entertained by mass media is documented by a number of studies dealing with political content. Cranston[23] notes that soon after telecasts of political conventions began, entertainment became a part of the format as a way of holding audience attention; Kelley[62] points out that a proportion of the audience for campaign debates comes from those who are interested in the "game" aspect of elections; and Atkin and others[6] found that people's attitudes toward candidates at least partially depend on the entertainment value of the candidates' commercials.

In a study of television viewing across the Canadian-American border, Sparkes[102] found that Canadian viewers turn to U.S. television primarily for entertainment, and United States viewers turn to Canadian stations to supplement local offerings, particularly of sports.

Katz and Foulkes[50] state that mass media may serve for individual retreat or for keeping "close" to desired others, but that no particular medium is associated with escapism. They further caution that "escape" content does not function as "escape" for everyone using it and suggest that, therefore, the term "escape" should apply to consequences rather than to a pattern of use.

However, Pearlin[84] found a relationship between stressful experiences and escape viewing, while studies of alienation by McLeod, Ward and Tancill[73] and Sargent and Stempel[96] found that those who can be described as "alienated" spend more time with television, especially its fantasy content, and apparently use television as an escape medium. No correlation was found between alienation and newspaper readership.

Television and newspapers can both serve as a mechanism for passing time. Mehling[74] found that 2 percent of those who selected television as the one medium they would keep and 2 percent of those who selected newspapers gave "time killing" as their reason. Neuman[81] in his study of television news recall found that 12 percent of television news viewers surveyed watch in order to relax, and Davis[25] determined that one function of television for older adults is to divide the day into meaningful segments.

For Communication

As an adjunct to interpersonal communication, television and newspapers may be used in three ways: to keep people close together, to substitute for personal relations and to provide something to talk about.

Hamilton and Lawless[43] found that 'keeping the family at home" was the most important reason for having a television set and the second-most important reason for wanting one, and Merrill[76] determined that children under five watch televison most frequently after 7 p.m. when they can be with other family members.

In a study of leisure activities, Meyersohn[77] found that most heavy viewers also participate in other forms of recreation including people-oriented activities, such as visiting, but that higher income people who are heavy viewers do not engage in many other leisure activities. Like the elderly persons surveyed by Davis,[25] they apparently turn to television for companionship.

Several studies document an increase in television and newspaper use when people see the social utility of this activity. For college students, Atkin[4] determined that the number of newspapers read and the time spent reading newspapers and magazines is positively correlated with the number of groups in which news is discussed. Troldahl and Van Dam[108] found that persons who frequently give opinions or ask for information are more likely to use several media than are those who seldom talk about the news. Givers and askers differ from each other in their media selection, with more opinion *givers* reading newspapers and more *askers* watching television. Radio and magazine use is very similar for both groups. Among senior citizens, Graney and Graney[33] found that television use is positively correlated with telephone use and attendance at meetings.

Who Uses Newspapers and Television

Clearly, both newspapers and television can be used for knowledge, diversion and as an adjunct to interpersonal communication. The total time and attention devoted to either medium, as well as the amount of that time and attention that will be devoted to any one of the uses, depend on the individual. But these differences frequently can be predicted from demographic and attitudinal characteristics.

In general, persons with higher incomes and more education are more likely to read newspapers than are those with lower levels of education and income, who generally devote more time to television.

Williams and Lindsay[113] found that time spent with newspapers and television is more closely correlated with social stratification than with age, sex or race. Although this study showed little difference in source of "important news" for persons classified as "influential," "social workers" and "clients," major differences were found in the amount of time devoted to newspapers and television.

Among the "influentials," 90 percent read a newspaper every day, but only 6 percent watched more than three hours of television. Among the "clients," the

figures were 53 percent and 39 percent, respectively. "Social workers" were intermediate in their media habits.

A similar study by Greenberg and Dervin[37] found that low-income persons are much more likely to rely on television as a source of world and local news, and they are much less likely to use newspapers for that information. Wade and Schramm[110] reported that television is the source of news for most people during a national election campaign, but newspapers are preferred by highly educated, professional and white collar workers, and by high-income groups.

Considering education as a predictor separate from socioeconomic status, Vinyard and Sigel[109] found that reliance on multiple media increases as education increases; but Kline[56] and Samuelson, Carter and Ruggels[94] reported that as education levels increase, the total amount of time spent with media decreases. Much of this decrease comes at the expense of the diversionary content of television.

Considering race as a predictor of media use, Allen[1] and McCombs[68] found that television is more important for blacks than for whites; but studies by Sharon[100] and by Williams and Lindsay[113] suggest that most media differences between the races are more closely correlated with socioeconomic status than with race itself. Furthermore, work by Williams, Dordick and Horstmann[114] suggests that ethnic subgroup and community standards, as well as economic conditions, may be responsible for differences that are usually reported as racial.

In the area of newspaper readership, racial differences persist even when controls are applied for socioeconomic status. Bogart[11] found that newspaper readership for blacks and whites follows generally the same pattern by sex, age and income—with the exception that it falls off more sharply among blacks with very low income and those with less than a college educaton. Sharon[100] determined that whites read more of all kinds of printed matter than do blacks, regardless of economic status, and that this difference is particularly apparent in newspaper readership. Among those of both races who do read newspapers, blacks read less of the editorials, society pages and regular advertisements and more sports and television-radio listings than do whites.

Sex is usually one of the demographic characteristics used to predict newspaper and television use; however, like race, it is unsatisfactory when considered apart from education and economic status. Greenberg[36] found that women prefer television to newspapers as a news source, but work by Wade and Schramm[110] and Kraus, Mehling and El-Assal[58] suggests that this pattern is reversed for women with high education levels. Furthermore, results obtained by Rarick[86] indicating that women tend to be home- and family-oriented in their newspaper reading—while men are more oriented toward matters outside the home—may be more a function of time spent at home than of innate sexual differences. By way of comparison, Katzman[51] determined that women make up 71 percent of the audience for daytime soap operas, but the other 29 percent of the audience comes from the children and unemployed and retired men—who also happen to spend much of their time at home.

As a general model, Greenberg and Kumata[38] found that television use peaks during high school, then decreases through age 50, but increases again thereafter.

Children begin their media use with television. According to Merrill,[76] the initial appeal is the medium itself rather than any particular content. The heaviest viewing occurs between the ages of 4 and 12. By age 13, most have begun to use other media. Schramm, Lyle and Parker[96] found that while newspaper readership begins after television use, by the end of high school two-thirds of children read a newspaper daily. Comics are generally the first thing children read.

Clarke[19] found that, in general, children's newspaper reading is associated with parental values—but that family status alone is predictive of children's attention to newspapers. In a later study,[18] he concluded that for teen-age boys, readership of science and sports news is more predictive of lasting interest in newspapers than is readership of teen supplements.

Effects of Newspapers and Television

To enhance comparison, each of the studies on newspaper and television *effects* was assigned to one of six categories—political, violence and aggression, general world views, general learning, media use and interpersonal communication, and consumer affairs. Within each of these six groupings, the effects on attitudes, knowledge and behavior were analyzed where possible.*

Political Attitudes

The three panel studies by Bogart,[10] Rollings and Blascovitch[92] and McCombs and Weaver,[71] and most of the surveys on political attitudes, suggest that newspapers mainly reinforce pre-existing political attitudes and contribute somewhat to the formation of new attitudes. The single experiment by Atkin[5] suggests that

*This is a review of newspaper and television news content on these attitudes, knowledge and behavior. For example, the extensive specialized literature on the effects of advertising (e.g., [30,34] and [117]) is not included here.

newspaper reporting of public opinion polls can influence attitudes toward a specific political candidate, especially if the polls tap the opinions of highly valued reference groups.

In spite of Atkin's contradictory experimental evidence, some other studies of political attitudes[16, 21, 49] suggest that exposure to newspapers is not enough to cause more long-term change in political attitude, at least not by itself. Some of the studies which examine correlates of both newspapers and television exposure[7, 69, 71, 92] further suggest that television may be more effective at stimulating the formation of new, short-term political attitudes and general political interest, whereas newspapers may be more effective at reinforcing already-formed political attitudes.

Political Knowledge.

Both panel studies and surveys found that exposure to newspapers is associated wtih increased political knowledge (variously defined).[7, 10, 17, 21, 49, 53, 72, 98] All of these studies, except one by Bogart,[10] also included measures of television use (usually television news viewing), and all but one concluded that exposure to newspapers is more strongly correlated with increased political knowledge than is exposure to television news. The exception is a survey of elementary school children in Maryland; it found that television news viewing was more strongly correlated with knowledge of which roles were governmental than was reading newspaper current events material.[92] There are no experimental studies dealing with political knowledge.

A number of fairly recent studies,[70, 78, 115] several of them done over time with the same persons,[66, 71, 107] also suggest that newspaper emphasis on specific political issues is more strongly correlated with overall audience concern about the same issues than is television emphasis on such issues, leading to the inference that newspapers are more effective at telling people what issues to think about in a political campaign than is television, especially earlier in a campaign.[69]

As a whole, the findings from these studies are surprisingly consistent: exposure to newspapers seems to lead to more concern over political issues and to more political knowledge than does exposure to television.

Political Behavior

A number of studies, mostly analyses of newspaper editorials and voting records, suggest that newspaper endorsements of particular political candidates are associated with the winning of elections, especially nonpartisan races where there are few salient or controversial issues.[39, 44, 65, 67, 93] Two studies by Robinson also found aggregate correlations of editorial endorsements with winning the 1968 and 1972 presidential elections in this country.[88, 89]

Most of the studies on political behavior which include measures of both newspaper and television exposure suggest that newspaper use tends to be more strongly associated with voting turnout and various other kinds of political activity than does televison use, even when only television *public affairs* viewing is measured.[17, 32] This conclusion seems to hold for both adults and children.

Likewise, the studies of political behavior which include only measures of newspaper exposure also conclude that such exposure is positively correlated with political participation in Japan,[60] with voting turnout in Ohio,[64] with general political activity in North Carolina[8] and with voting choice in Wisconsin and North Carolina.[5, 8]

Violence and Aggression

Only three studies of violence and aggression were found which considered newspaper exposure as a factor.[31, 119, 120] The first, a survey of U.S. adults, found that heavy TV viewing—regardless of specific content—is associated with more distrust of other persons, more fear of the world in general, an exaggerated fear of being involved in some kind of violence and more dependence upon (positive attitudes toward) established authorities. Heavy newspaper readers, however, showed just the opposite trends—less distrust of others, less fear of the world and less dependence upon established authority.

With regard to knowledge, one of these studies also found that heavy newspaper readers were less likely to overestimate the number of persons involved in law enforcement than were heavy TV viewers, and heavy newspaper readers seemed to have a more trusting picture of the world than did heavy TV viewers. These patterns held for all persons except less-educated, lower-income blacks.

With regard to behavior, the second and third studies[119, 120] examined crime statistics for Detroit, Cleveland, Minneapolis and Vancouver, British Columbia, during and before newspaper strikes in these cities. These studies found that the rates of some crimes (burglary, robbery, larceny and auto theft) declined significantly during newspaper strikes in Detroit, but there was no evidence of any general relationship between newspaper strikes and crime rates in the other cities, leading the author to conclude that the relationship found in Detroit was probably due to chance and that "there appears to be no general relationship between newspaper publication and crime rates." (p. 612)[120]

General Views of the World

Four surveys (including one panel study) which dealt with newspaper use and general attitudes toward real-world phenomena found that newspaper use is associated with the formation of attitudes about topics re-

ceiving coverage in newspapers, such as fluoridation[14] and world pollution.[30] Newspaper exposure is also associated with innovativeness, empathy and cosmopolitanism among farmers in Colombia.[91]

The fourth study, involving Indiana University students, found that newspaper editorials and editorial cartoons advocating the same point of view result in more opinion change than either would by itself. Editorials alone seem to produce more opinion change than do cartoons alone.[13]

In the late 1950's, some seven or eight years after the introduction of television throughout the United States, most people perceived that they obtained most of their general news from newspapers rather than television.[59] But by the early 1970's, most people said they obtained most of their general news, especially impressions of international affairs, from television rather than newspapers.[20, 60]

Yet during the 1962-63 New York newspaper strike, Kimball,[54] in a panel study of 200 newspaper readers, found complaints about "lack of detail" and lack of opportunity to "absorb the news" from other media, especially television. Those questioned also said they wanted to know more about general news, sports, advertisements and financial news, suggesting that this kind of information normally was obtained from newspapers.

Newspaper exposure seems to be correlated not only with various kinds of real-world knowledge for adults. There also is evidence from surveys conducted by Schramm, Lyle and Parker[97] that as children grow older, they increasingly use newspapers (and other print media) for learning about the real world, whereas television is used primarily for entertainment and escape.

General Learning

An experiment with 160 university students by Dommermuth[28] found that a printed version of a message produced significantly more change in opinion than a televised version of the same message. Seven other studies which examined the relationships between newspaper exposure and general learning suggested that both newspaper stories and television news shows can convey information and increase the salience of various topics, but information *loss* seems to be greater from television than from newspapers. Printed messages seem to result in more information retention than do televised messages,[28, 116] but there is still a substantial amount of information loss (estimated at an average of 77 percent for radio, television and newspapers combined in an experiment by Wilson). In an earlier experiment, Hazard[45] also found that less exposure to newspapers was associated with less information gain from television newscasts.

A combined content analysis and survey by Booth[12] found that the association between *space* devoted to a topic in a newspaper and recall of information about that topic is stronger than the association between the amount of *time* devoted to a subject by television and recall of information about the subject. In both newspapers and television, accompanying pictures seemed to increase recall of information about the subjects.

Although most of the evidence on information loss and retention from different media is experimental, several surveys by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien[106] find that learning occurs from newspapers but varies with one's initial level of education. These researchers found that knowledge levels differ more in a community with a regularly published newspaper than in a community with a newspaper strike. They also found that the association between level of education and understanding of "more publicized" topics is greater than the association between level of education and understanding of "less publicized" topics. These findings led Tichenor, Donohue and Olien to conclude that newspapers may serve to reinforce existing inequities in knowledge between better-educated and less-educated persons.

Other studies suggest that television plays a major role in delivering important "breaking" news (such as the assassination of a President or a disaster involving many persons), with newspapers tending primarily to supplement television and radio reports of such news.[27] And even though evening television news broadcasts report fewer key events than do the front pages of newspapers, those who rely on television news rather than newspapers don't miss much substance but rather the *details* of major stories.[44]

The single experimental study which dealt with the relationship of general problem-solving behavior to print-media use found that for seventh-grade children, printed messages resulted in more creative problem-solving behavior than did televised solutions, but the differences were not statistically significant.[75]

Media Use and Interpersonal Communication

The single study which considered the relationship between newspaper use and attitudes toward other media involved focus-group discussions with non-readers and light readers of newspapers in Canada.[2] This study found that non-readers and light readers tended to have negative attitudes about reading in general (they regarded it as "work"), and they tended to like radio and television more than newspapers because they perceived radio and TV to be better at presenting what is happening in the world "right now."

Two studies suggest that regular daily newspaper readers tend to be more aware of other print and broadcast media offerings in their communities than do non-readers of daily newspapers.[2, 3] A related study by Deutschmann and Danielson[27] also found that information about important news seems to go directly from

television, radio, and—to a lesser extent—from newspapers to their audiences without much interpersonal relaying. These studies also indicate that persons generally do talk with others about major news learned from both newspapers and television.

Further, readers of a weekly newspaper are more likely than not to be readers of a daily newspaper,[2] and readers of a daily newspaper are more likely to watch television *news* on a regular basis than are non-readers.[3] In addition, daily newspaper readers are more likely to belong to community organizations than are non-readers, and thus are more likely to engage in interpersonal communication about community issues and problems.

Summing Up

These studies of the uses and effects of newspapers and television provide many insights into the similarities and differences between these two media, but they also leave many questions unanswered.

With regard to *uses* of newspapers and television, we need more studies which concentrate on people's *motives* for use as well as on various *situational factors* (such as jobs, families, living areas, etc.). While use of newspapers and television for *knowledge* has been fairly well-researched, we know less about use of these and other mass media for *diversion* and as an adjunct to *interpersonal communication*. That is, there are not many studies which look at mass media in relation to other communication activities, either in terms of motives or in terms of the effects those media have on individuals.

With regard to the *effects* of newspapers and television, we *do* have quite a few studies on *political* effects, but not many on the impact of these media on people's *emotions, values* and *propensity to act aggressively* toward others.

But the studies to date do establish one point very clearly: in speaking about competition or differences between newspapers and television, it is necessary to specify precisely what *kind* of competition or difference is under discussion. ■

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Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business

By Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc.

This is the second report prepared for ANPA by Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc., "Tracking the Attitudes of the Public," regarding the newspaper business. It covers the very basic and fundamental question of the credibility of newspapers among the general public and government officials on a national and state basis. An earlier report was published in ANPA General Bulletin No. 66, Dec. 20, 1978.

The source for this report is "Corporate Priorities," an annual tracking study conducted by Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc. and used for planning and public relations strategies by many major corporations in the country. This report presents the results of "Corporate Priorities" research from 1976 through 1978 (surveys are conducted annually in February-March). A full Yankelovich, Skelly and White report to ANPA later this year will update these results with 1979 findings.

Findings In Brief

The study shows that:

- While a strong majority of the public feels that the news they get from newspapers and television is "biased," they tend to define that "bias" not as a problem of showing favoritism to one group or another but rather as a problem of emphasizing the bad news over the good.

- Overall, only about four out of 10 Americans say that they "always or usually" believe newspapers. At the same time, however, compared to other major communicators in our society, newspapers and other major media have relatively strong credibility.

- Among the public as a whole, no apparent distinction is made between the credibility of newspapers and that of TV news. However, among college students, newspapers have unusually strong credibility, while TV news does not.

- Among government officials, both newspapers and news magazines have slightly greater credibility than TV news. Again, like the public, the *relative* credibility of newspapers is strong. On an *absolute* basis, however, only about one out of three government officials views either newspapers or TV news as very credible.

Methodology

The general public sample used by Corporate Priorities is a stratified replicated random sample of 2,200 persons and is projectable to the total U.S. population aged 16 years and over. Interviews are conducted in the home. The sample of government officials surveyed annually includes Congressmen, Senators and key congressional staff (115 in 1977, 114 in 1978), high-level federal agency officials (61 in 1977, 60 in 1978), state legislators and state agency officials from 11 key states (94 in 1977, 92 in 1978) and officials from 20 large cities (41 in 1977, 34 in 1978).

The Public: Credibility Of Information

In both 1976 and 1978, the general public was given a list of possible sources of information and was asked for each source whether they tended to "always," "usually," "sometimes," "seldom," or "never" believe information which came from this communicator (Table 1).

Table 1

Credibility of Information Sources Among General Public

"Every day we all hear different points of view from different people and different institutions. We are interested in knowing how often you believe what different people say. Please tell me how often you believe what each of them says."

	Always/Usually Believe		Seldom/Never Believe		Net	
	1978	1976	1978	1976	1978	1976
Ralph Nader	44*	45	20	18	+ 24	+ 27
Newspapers	39	38	15	18	+ 24	+ 20
TV commentators	40	37	17	18	+ 23	+ 19
Congressional leaders	18	--	28	--	- 10	--
Corporate executives	15	12	36	39	- 21	- 27
Union leaders	17	13	43	42	- 26	- 29
Public Issue ads	10	6	50	53	- 40	- 47

*Results are expressed as percentages

The results indicated that about four out of 10 Americans (38 percent in 1976 and 39 percent in 1978) always or usually believe newspapers. Television commentators had approximately the same credibility (37 percent in 1976 and 40 percent in 1978). At the same time, about one out of six in the public said that they "seldom" or "never" believed information from either newspapers or television.

The sole individual whose public credibility was measured in both 1976 and 1978 was Ralph Nader. Not only did his credibility remain constant over this period, but it also appeared to be slightly higher than that of both newspapers and TV commentators (45 percent in 1976 and 44 percent in 1978 said that they always or usually believed Nader).

Significantly, however, other communicators (congressional leaders, union leaders, corporate executives) showed significantly weaker credibility profiles. Indeed, corporate public issue advertisements were seen as not very believable by as many as one out of two Americans.

Looking at various demographic groups, one finds no statistically significant patterns in terms of the credibility of either newspapers or TV commentators. The only exception is college students, where one finds unusually strong credibility for newspapers. Fully 52 percent of college students interviewed in 1978 said that they always or usually believed newspapers, making newspapers significantly more credible than TV commentators (39 percent) and on a par with Ralph Nader (49 percent) on U.S. campuses.

In addition to this basic credibility reading among the public, the 1977 Corporate Priorities survey also asked the public whether they thought "television news and newspapers bias the news and distort events" (Table 2). Only 24 percent of the public *rejected* this view, and fully 72 percent indicated that it was definitely true (30 percent) or probably true (42 percent). The only demographic groups showing unusually strong agreement with this statement were Republicans and conservatives.

Table 2

Attitudes of General Public Toward Media Distortion

"Television and Newspapers Bias the News and Distort Events"

	Total Public	Republicans	Conservatives
Definitely true	30*	39	37
Probably true	42	34	38
Probably not true	20	19	16
Definitely not true	4	3	2
Don't know/no answer	4	5	6

*Percent

Table 3

Major Criticisms of the Media By the General Public (1977)

"Which, if any, of these do you think are valid criticisms of news you get from television and newspapers?"

	Percent
Too much emphasis on bad news and not good news	71
Views politicians too cynically	23
Unfair to consumerists, environmentalists	14
Unfair to labor	14
Liberal/Eastern bias	14
Conservative/establishment bias	13
Too pro-business	13
Unfair to business	13
Too pro-union	12
Too pro-consumerist, environmentalists	10
None of the above	13

A follow-up question tried to ascertain what people thought the nature of the media bias to be (Table 3). Fully seven out of 10 indicated that they saw the bias as "putting too much emphasis on bad news and not the good." Only small minorities thought the media were unfair to labor (14 percent), to business (13 percent) or to consumerists and environmentalists (14 percent). And equally small minorities thought that the media were too pro-union (12 percent), too pro-business (13 percent) or too pro-consumerist and environmentalist (10 percent). In addition, only 14 percent felt that the media had a liberal-Eastern bias, although this appeared to be believed to an unusual degree by the Republicans (20 percent) and conservatives (23 percent) who were the most likely to complain about media bias overall.

Government Officials: Credibility Of Information

In both 1977 and 1978, Corporate Priorities surveys of government officials included a question on credibility of various sources of information ranging from the media to interest groups to individuals. Included on the list were "leading newspapers," "news magazines" and "network news." (In 1979, the list will also include "local newspapers.")

Officials were asked to grade the credibility of each source of information from one (highly believable) to seven (not very believable). For comparative purposes,

Table 4

Credibility of Information Sources Among Government Officials

"We're interested in some of the sources of information used by government leaders such as yourself. For each of the sources on the card, please give me your feeling as to how believable you think this source of information is." (Score from 1 to 7; highly believable = 1 or 2.)

	Highly Believable					
	Total Government Officials		Federal Government Officials		State/Local Government Officials	
	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977
Leading newspapers	35*	34	40	40	30	26
News magazines	35	31	35	33	34	29
Large consulting firms	29	27	25	29	35	26
Network news	27	27	31	27	23	26
Common Cause	26	36	23	36	31	38
Environmental groups	25	23	26	21	23	26
Ralph Nader	22	25	21	24	25	27
Consumer groups	13	19	14	20	14	20
Industry spokesmen	7	7	7	8	6	6
Union leaders	6	4	8	5	4	5
Industry trade associations	6	--	7	--	6	--
Industry advertising on issues	2	2	2	--	3	6

*Percent

Table 5

Credibility of Information Sources Among Government Officials

"We're interested in some of the sources of information used by the government leaders such as yourself. For each of the sources on the card, please give me your feeling as to how believable you think this source of information is." (Score from 1 to 7; not very believable = 6 or 7.)

	Not Very Believable					
	Total Government Officials		Federal Government Officials		State/Local Government Officials	
	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977
Industry advertising on issues	37*	32	41	36	32	29
Industry trade associations	21		24		17	
Ralph Nader	17	10	19	10	15	11
Union leaders	15	15	14	10	17	23
Consumer groups	10	6	8	8	11	6
Industry spokesmen	9	8	8	8	11	9
Common Cause	9	7	8	6	10	9
Large consulting firms	7	4	9	6	5	4
Environmental groups	6	7	4	7	8	8
Network news	4	3	3	3	-	5
News magazines	4	2	4	2	5	3
Leading newspapers	4	2	2	1	7	4

*Percent

we have analyzed the results as follows: scores of one or two indicate high credibility, scores of three, four or five indicate moderate credibility, scores of six or seven indicate low credibility (Tables 4 and 5).

All three media which were measured showed *relatively* strong credibility compared to others, including Ralph Nader, Common Cause, consumerists, environmentalists, union spokesmen, industry spokesmen, etc. However, "leading newspapers" were seen as highly credible by only 34 percent of government officials in 1977 and 35 percent in 1978. News magazines had approximately equal credibility (31 percent in 1977 and 35 percent in 1978). Network news appeared to be slightly less credible (27 percent in both years). Fewer than 5 percent of government officials saw any of these media as having low credibility.

Separating out federal government officials from state and local officials, one finds, not surprisingly, that "leading newspapers" are less likely to be seen as highly credible by state and local officials (26 percent in 1977 and 30 percent in 1978) than they are by federal officials (40 percent in both years).

The results of the 1979 survey will reveal whether local newspapers are viewed more positively than "leading newspapers" by these same officials. ■

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